

February 20, 2017

To the members of the State of CT Appropriations Committee:

Understanding that budget reductions are expected, please consider the value of a particular service provider to all residents, public libraries. I hope that the proposed severe reductions can be mitigated.

The current proposal includes the total elimination of Support for BorrowIT Ct. This service is based upon efficient resource sharing, largely of municipal services. A study performed a few years back showed that it costs more than a dollar per loan for libraries to share their materials with other libraries. Many libraries benefit by being net borrowers, lending a larger number of items than they loan. However, a great many libraries including Portland Public Library are net lenders. This is a significant cost for a smaller library, encompassing the labor and materials needed to process loans and follow-up work to each loan transaction. The service is especially valued by patrons in nearby communities. Most importantly, this service combined with DeliverIT Ct, supports reading groups for youth and adults. We also take requests from teachers in our public schools and supply books for special reading events to them through cooperative sharing.

As municipalities look to decrease operating costs, reductions may occur that will prohibit our current level of cooperation. Other libraries surely will not be as willing and able to share their materials if they lose both reimbursement and reciprocal support from other libraries. Multiply this reduction by all Connecticut public libraries and there is a significant loss of services to our state's residents.

In summary, this is a valued service that is cost effective in that it allows leverage of existing expenses to provide better service and support of education and recreation through statewide resource sharing.

Sincerely,

Janet Nocek, Library Director

Portland Public Library